

<p align="center">Notice of Allowability</p>	Application No. 10/067,297	Applicant(s) WATANABE ET AL.	
	Examiner SAHERA HALIM	Art Unit 2457	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to RCE filed on August 26, 2009.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,2,5-24,29 and 30.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☒ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).**
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date <u>20090925</u> . 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____. |
|--|--|

/ARIO ETIENNE/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2457

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. Claims 1-2, 5-24, and 29 -30 have been allowed.
2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Luminita A. Todor (Reg. # 57,639) on September 25, 2009.

3. The application has been amended as follows:

Claims 4 and 25: canceled.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-distribution method utilized by a system including a plurality of user terminals and a computer connected to the user terminals via a network, the information-distribution method including:

accepting, from any of the user terminals, designation of at least one other user terminal among the user terminals, by the computer;

storing, by the computer, a buddy list in which at least one identifier identifying a user terminal is correlated with at least one other identifier

identifying the at least one other user terminal designated in said accepting designation;

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accepting, by the computer, from a source user terminal among the user terminals, a distribution content to be distributed and a distribution condition according to which the distribution content is distributed, the distribution condition including a stop condition, but neither the distribution content nor the distribution condition specifying any destination to which the distribution content to be distributed;

determining, by the computer, one or more primary destination user terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the primary destination user terminals being selected from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the source terminal in the buddy list, in accordance with the distribution condition;

transmitting, by the computer, the distribution content to the one or more primary destination user terminals;

until the stop condition is satisfied, by any recipient user terminal that has received the distribution content, determining one or more next-destination user terminals to which the recipient user terminal distributes the distribution content will be distributed, the one or more destination user terminals being selected from user terminals in a buddy list of the recipient user terminal, in accordance with the distribution condition, and transmitting the distribution content from the recipient user terminal to the one or more next-destination terminal;

recording stop-condition candidates, wherein the stop condition candidates are alternatives for the stop distribution condition; and

selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-distribution device connected to user terminals via a network, the information-distribution device comprising:

 designation-accepting means for accepting from any of the user terminals designation of at least one other user terminal among the user terminals;

 storing means for storing a buddy list in which at least one identifier identifying a user terminal is correlated with at least one other identifier identifying the at least one other user terminal whose designation has been accepted by said designation-accepting means;

 information-accepting means for accepting, from a source user terminal among the user terminals, an informational content to be distributed;

 distribution-condition-accepting means for accepting from the source terminal a distribution condition according to which the distribution content is distributed, the distribution condition including a stop condition;

 distributee-candidate-determining means for determining one or more primary destination terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the primary destination terminals being selected from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the source terminal in the buddy list, in accordance with the distribution condition;

 first distribution means for transmitting the distribution content to the one or more primary destination terminals; and

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distribution-catenating means for iteratively activating second distribution means respectively located in each of the user terminals that have received the distribution content, each second distribution means transmitting the distribution content, from any recipient user terminal to which the distribution content has been sent, to some or all of one or more destination user terminals selected by the second distribution means from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the recipient terminal in a buddy list of the recipient user terminal, in accordance with the distribution condition, until the stop condition is satisfied;

recording means for recording stop-condition candidates, wherein the stop-condition candidates are alternatives for the stop distribution condition; and

selecting means for selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium on which is recorded a information-distribution program utilized by a computer connected to user terminals via a network, the computer-readable recording medium on which is recorded a information- distribution program for executing:

accepting, from any of the user terminals, designation of at least one other user terminal among the user terminals;

storing a buddy list in which at least one identifier identifying a user terminal is correlated with at least one other identifier identifying the at least one other user terminal designated in said accepting designation;

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accepting, from a source user terminal among the user terminals, an informational content to be distributed and a distribution condition according to which the distribution content is distributed, the distribution condition including a stop condition;

determining one or more primary destination user terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the primary destination user terminals being selected from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the source terminal in the buddy list, in accordance with the distribution condition;

transmitting the distribution content to the one or more primary destination user terminals;

until the stop condition is satisfied, by any recipient user terminal to which the distribution content has been sent, determining one or more destination user terminals to which the informational content will be distributed, the one or more destination user terminals being selected from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the recipient terminal in a buddy list, in accordance with the distribution condition, and transmitting the informational content to the one or more destination user terminals, who become recipient user terminals upon receiving the informational content;

recording stop-condition candidates, wherein the stop condition candidates are alternatives for the stop distribution condition; and

selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

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24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer product, stored on a computer-readable recording medium, utilized by a computer connected to user terminals via a network, ~~the information distribution computer product is executed by the computer to perform steps comprising for making the computer function as:~~

~~designation-accepting means for~~ accepting from any of the user terminals designation of at least one other user terminal among the user terminals;

~~storing means for~~ storing a buddy list in which at least one identifier identifying a user terminal is correlated with at least one other identifier identifying the at least one other user terminal whose designation has been accepted by said designation-accepting means;

~~information-accepting means for~~ accepting, from a source user terminal among the user terminals, an informational content to be distributed;

~~distribution-condition-accepting means for~~ accepting from the source terminal a distribution condition according to which the distribution content is distributed, the distribution condition including a stop condition;

~~distributee-candidate-determining means for~~ determining one or more primary destination terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the primary destination terminals being selected from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the source terminal in the buddy list, in accordance with the distribution condition;

~~first distribution means for~~ transmitting the distribution content to the one or more primary destination terminals;

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~~second distribution means for~~ transmitting the distribution content, by any recipient user terminal to which the distribution content has been sent, to some or all of one or more destination user terminals selected by the recipient user terminal from user terminals whose identifiers are correlatively stored with the identifier of the recipient terminal in the buddy list, in accordance with the distribution condition; and

~~distribution-catenating means for~~ iteratively activating said second distribution means, until the stop condition is satisfied;

recording stop-condition candidates, wherein the stop-condition candidates are alternatives for the stop distribution condition; and

selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-distribution method for a system including a computer and user terminals connected via a network, the information- distribution method including:

providing distribution content to be distributed and a stop distribution condition to the computer by a source user terminal among the user terminals;

determining one or more destination terminals to which the distribution content is distributed by the computer based on a buddy list corresponding to the source terminal, transmitted by the source terminal with the distribution content;

first transmitting the distribution content from the computer to the one or more destination terminals;

iteratively, until the stop condition is met,

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determining one or more destination terminals to which the distribution content to be distributed by any recipient terminal who has received the distribution content,~~and~~

distributing the distribution content from the recipient terminal to the one or more destination terminals;

recording stop-condition candidates, wherein the stop condition candidates are alternatives for the stop distribution condition; and

selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information-distribution method for a system including a computer and user terminals connected via a network, the information-distribution method including:

distributing a distribution content provided by a first user terminal to the computer, to one or more second user terminals identified on a buddy list as corresponding to the first user terminal;~~and~~

distributing the distribution content from user terminals that received the distribution content to one or more user terminals identified in buddy lists of the respective user terminals until a stop distribution condition provided by the first terminal is met, wherein any user terminal that has received distribution content determines the one or more user terminals to which to distribute the content if the stop distribution condition has not been met;

recording stop-condition candidates, wherein the stop condition candidates are alternatives for the stop distribution condition; and

selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

Reason for Allowance

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Prior art of record fails to teach a combination of elements, as appeared in the independent claims, including recording stop-condition candidates that are alternatives for the stop distribution condition and selecting at least one of the stop-condition candidates as the stop distribution condition by the source user terminal.

5. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Examiner's Amendment."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sahera Halim whose telephone number is (571) 272-4003. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571) 272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Sahera Halim
Patent Examiner

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